



YEARS OF POLO



HISTORY
Six generations

MOTORSPORT
Consecutive victories

DESIGN
A timeless icon

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Consecutive victories



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“Ever since its first generation, the Polo has stood for affordable mobility – a car for everyone.”

THOMAS SCHÄFER

Member of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG, Brand Group Core, CEO Volkswagen Brand

Dear Readers,

Your first car, your first trip to the seaside, your first taste of independence – and the ability to choose for yourself where the next adventure will take you. The VW Polo has been at the heart of so many unforgettable moments and stories.

What do I particularly love about our small compact car? Since the very first generation, it has represented affordable mobility. No frills – but top quality, excellent handling, and practical innovations. A car for everyone. Accessible and likeable. A true Volkswagen through and through. And now, it's been around for 50 years. A perfect reason to give the Polo some well-deserved attention this year!

With an initial length of around 3.5 metres, the Polo was the very definition of a small car. Today, with over 20 million units produced worldwide, it's one of the greats, ranking among the most successful small cars in the world.

Iconic special editions have played a key role in this success, steadily growing its fan base: from the Polo Jeans, following in the footsteps of the famous Beetle, to the Polo Genesis in Violet Touch Pearl Effect, and perhaps the most eye-catching of them all – the multi-coloured Polo Harlekin.

‘Small but mighty’ is the perfect way to sum up the Polo, not just in terms of looks but also in its sporty credentials. In the World Rally Championship, the Polo R WRC won an impressive four world rally championship titles. For everyday driving, the GT and G40 series brought plenty of excitement back in the day, while the GTI continues to deliver thrilling performance today.

Our team, which now manufactures the Polo in Kariega, South Africa, is immensely proud of this compact marvel. Rightly so, in my opinion – it's remarkable how the VW team has continually reinvented the Polo over five decades, adapting it to meet the needs of different generations, much like its big brother, the Golf.

Happy Birthday, Polo! Dear readers, I hope you thoroughly enjoy this publication!

Yours,
Thomas Schäfer

LESS IS MORE

1975



POLO I 1975-1981

When it was unveiled in March 1975, the Polo was the smallest car Volkswagen had ever produced. Despite being just 3.5 metres long, it offered ample space for four people and their luggage. At the time, it became the smallest member of a new, modern model range alongside the Passat, Scirocco, and Golf. From a technical perspective, the small car was based on the Audi 50, which had been available since October 1974; the two cars were identical in design, with the exception of a few parts. The high-revving 0.9-litre engine also came from the Audi factory in Ingolstadt. Providing 29 kW (40 PS), it powered the Polo (which weighed just 685 kilogrammes) to speeds of up to 132 km/h.

The three-door small car offered a range of equipment that was well-crafted, but had been reduced to the most necessary items to allow the vehicle to be sold at an affordable price. The Polo N was the entry-level version, available from DM 7,500, while the Polo L was available for an additional DM 510. The superior "L" equipment included a two-stage heater blower, rear window wiper, and carpet. In 1976, 37 kW and 44 kW (50 PS and 60 PS) engines were added to the range, and a model update provided a more modern look.

In 1977, the Derby notchback saloon was launched as an additional body variant. The Polo GT arrived in 1979, offering a sporty look. Customers looking to reduce their fuel consumption could opt for the 1981 Polo Formel E, which included fuel-saving technology.

1.1

**MILLION
TOTAL PRODUCTION
WORLDWIDE**



"Polo. A short car makes a big impression."
POLO I ADVERT, 1975



DERBY I, 1977
Saloon with notchback, the first derivative of the Polo



POLO I, 1979
Model update with more voluminous plastic bumpers and plastic radiator grille

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

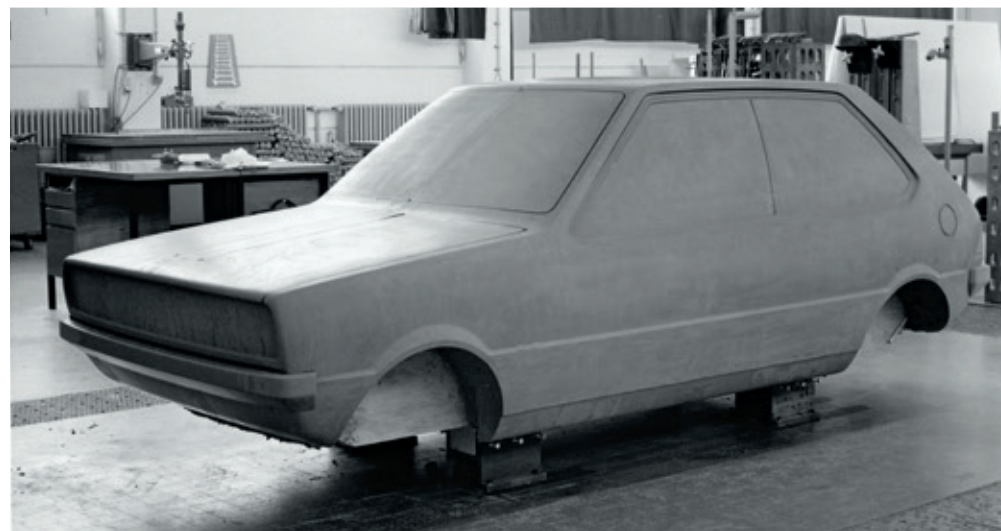
SPIRITUAL TWINS

The Audi 50 and the Volkswagen Polo not only have many things in common on the outside.



When the new small car, the Volkswagen Polo, was born in March 1975, it already had a twin brother. The almost identical Audi 50 had been on the market since October 1974. However, both small cars rolled off the assembly line exclusively at the Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg.

The early seventies were a turbulent time for the Wolfsburg-based car manufacturer. Within a very short space of time, the model range was enriched to include state-of-the-art front-wheel-drive vehicles. The brand was also planning to expand the lower end of the model segment – where there was demand for a completely new, small compact car. The aim of the modern project was to gain a foothold in the small car segment and pit the new model against competitors from Italy and France. Things had to move quickly – and they did: it took less than three years to progress from the first draft to the start of sales.



Audi NSU and its Board Member for Development, Dr. Ludwig Kraus, were on board right from the start. He brought the young designer of the Audi 80, Hartmut Warkuß, into the team. Working closely with Wolfsburg, the basic features of a new compact car in the lower A0 vehicle class were created. Its layout was modern: a two-box design, compact all-in-one solution with a wide-opening boot lid and folding rear bench seat. The project was given an additional boost when Rudolf Leiding joined Volkswagen. Leiding, the former CEO of Audi, knew Ludwig Kraus very well. One thing quickly became clear: the new compact car would be as much Audi as it was Volkswagen!

The compact small car covered the customer spectrum from economical to comfortable, acting as a sparring partner for the Golf (and initially the Volkswagen Beetle as well). The Golf for the A-segment was developed at the same time and went into mass production in 1974 – along with the new A0 vehicle, which had been christened the Audi 50.

The modular principle was advanced during this time, which allowed the same components to be used in different Group models with largely identical vehicle technology and was intended to ensure the company's long-term profitability. And this is how the small Audi car from Ingolstadt came to be produced at the Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg from the summer of 1974. The almost identical Volkswagen Polo followed suit, albeit with a slight delay, and went into production on 5 March 1975.

AUDI OR VOLKSWAGEN?

The differences are marginal, only the roof rounding at the sides was different.

MODERN LAYOUT

A compact all-in-one solution with clean lines and a wide-opening boot lid.



Looking good, with a compact body and a practical boot lid, the Polo perfectly reflected the spirit of the times. Agility, excellent vehicle handling, and economical engines were the new core virtues that shaped the overall positive image. The car sold well right from the get-go, with the larger Golf having already done some good groundwork with customers. Passat, Scirocco, Golf, and Polo – the new Volkswagen model family was now complete.

1981 THE SMALL CAR WITH AN ESTATE FEEL



POLO II 1981-1994

In September 1981, Volkswagen launched the second-generation Polo. The completely redesigned body increased the length to 3.66 metres and boasted a unique look. The steeply sloping rear made the Polo a two-door estate, small but with plenty of space. The headroom in particular had increased substantially compared with the first model series. Once again, the Polo II was a lightweight car, weighing only 770 kilogrammes in its base version.

Following the introduction of the squareback, the fastback Coupé was added to the range in 1982. Under the bonnet were stronger petrol engines, which gave the car faster acceleration. And Germany's smallest diesel engine providing 33 kW (45 PS) made its debut in the VW Polo in 1987.

In 1984, the Polo range was supplemented by an entry-level model, the Fox. The limited-edition Polo Coupé GT G40 was launched in 1987. Offering 85 kW (115 PS), this was the most powerful variant of the Polo so far. It was also the first model to feature the scroll-type supercharger, a new style of compressor developed by Volkswagen.

In 1990, the Polo II received an extensive model update: it now sported eye-catching rectangular headlights, as well as aerodynamically designed, integrated bumpers and a modified radiator grille. The Polo II would remain in production for 13 years.



POLO FOX, 1984
Inexpensive entry-level model for a younger target group.



POLO NOTCHBACK, 1985
The Derby becomes the Polo notchback in 1985.

2.7

**MILLION
TOTAL PRODUCTION
WORLDWIDE**

Kaum ist er draußen, schon ist er in.

Ein ein Jahr ist der neue Polo jetzt auf dem Markt und schon haben wir anderen den Rücken festgenäht. Er läuft und läuft und läuft. Und warum? Weil er ein einfach nutzbares Auto ist. Weil er geräumig ist, sparsam und komfortabel.

Gehung, schweiften sie kurz zu fragen: Sie jetzt. In Zukunft der Polo nur 3,66 m lang, 1,70 m hoch und der Innenraum bietet Platz für fünf Erwachsene, ein kleines Päckchen an Ballen.

Und sparsam, trotz dieser Kraft, fragen Sie weiter. Im Auch mit spärlicher 41 kW 1600 Polo beschleunigt der Polo nur 8,1 l/100 km (bei 90 km/h), 8,1 l/100 km (bei 120 km/h) und 10,1 l/100 km (bei 160 km/h) nach DIN 70020 auf 100 km. Und das ist alles, was 29 kW 150 bzw. 40 PS und vor allem der Polo Formel E-Motor brauchen noch weniger. Also komfortabel? Kaum ein so kur-

geres Auto komfortabel sein! Und als je größer der dieselelektronischen Ausstattungsvarianten C, CI oder CI.

Machen Sie sich mit einer Probefahrt. Steigen Sie ein und Sie werden selbst wissen und Sie wissen, wollen Sie nicht mehr wechseln.

Polo. Der neue Volkswagen von Volkswagen.

"It's just come out, but it's already in."
POLO II ADVERT, 1981

PROVING THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE BIG TO BE SPORTY



A GT at first glance: the Polo shows off its sporty side.



WORLD-RECORD-BREAKING G

With the new G-Lader technology, the Polo set a world speed record on 13 August 1985. In a 24-hour record-breaking drive on the Volkswagen proving grounds in Ehra-Lessien, the average speed of 208.13 km/h was much higher than the existing record of 168.63 km/h in the 1,300 cc class. The modified prototype was piloted by rally professional and Volkswagen factory driver Jochi Kleint.

The small car from Wolfsburg first put on its sports gear in 1979. And with the innovative scroll-type supercharger (G-Lader) in 1987, it began to win over fans in their droves.

Red, black, sporty: The agile small car showed off its sporting prowess as a GT model for the first time in 1979. With a radiator grille framed in red – just like the Golf GTI –, black-red steel wheels, black trim strips, GT badges, and sporty interior features, the Polo I GT was a real eye-catcher. However, its power was unremarkable: with a small 1.3-litre naturally aspirated engine under the bonnet and delivering just 44 kW (60 PS), it was not much of a powerhouse. But even though its sportiness was only superficial, the Polo I GT definitely made a splash for its time.

Little Volkswagen: In 1982, the Polo II was launched as a fastback coupé. As a GT version, it already had significantly more oomph thanks to the new 55-kW (75 PS) engine. Christened the “little Volkswagen”

in the adverts, it offered genuine driving pleasure with a top speed of 170 km/h.

A real wolf in sheep's clothing: The Polo II Coupé GT G40, which took to the stage in May 1987, was a mini revolutionary. The compact black car was a racing car right from the outset. In 1987, it was still limited to a small batch of 500 units, which featured the G-Lader for the first time – an innovative new type of compressor.

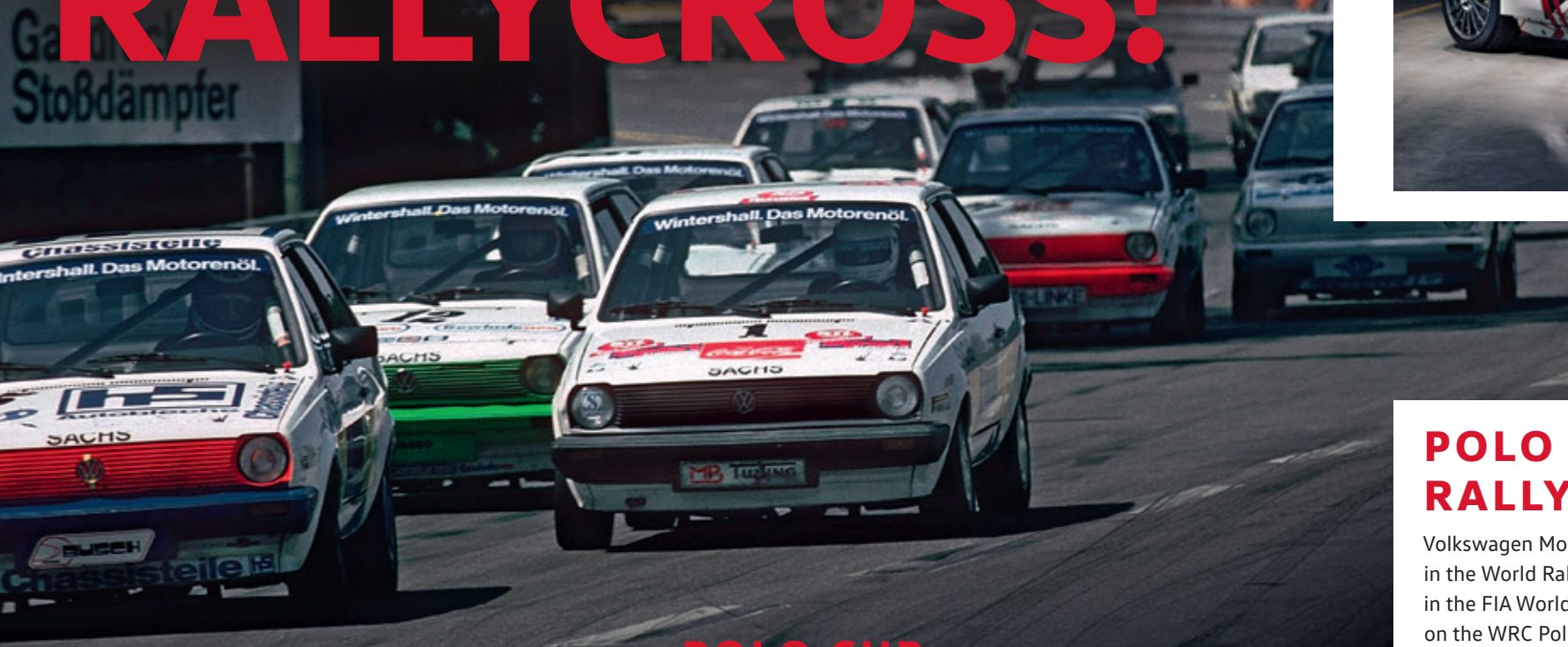
The mechanically-driven scroll-type supercharger got the most out of the 1.3-litre 85-kW (115 PS) engine and pushed the small car to a top speed of 195 km/h. The car made a real statement at the time – and marked a milestone in the history of the sporty Polo.

By 1989, a further 1,500 units of the Polo GT G40 had been produced, now also in Tornado Red, Helios Blue Metallic and Alpine White. Five hundred of them were earmarked for export to France. These 2,000 units of the most powerful Polo model to date were in incredibly high demand and the waiting list of potential customers was so long that purchase options ended up being raffled off.

After a short break in construction, the G-Lader became an official member of the Polo model range in 1991. It was now known simply as the Polo Coupé G40, or more commonly just as the G40, and was produced as the 2F facelifted model. This model came with a catalytic converter, delivered 83 kW (113 PS) and was no longer a limited edition.

RACING! RALLYING! RALLYCROSS!

Ga...
Stoßdämpfer



With the Polo, Volkswagen focused on motorsport from an early stage. It started out as a way to get up-and-coming talent into touring car racing. Later, they moved into the world of rally driving before going on to become World Champions in rallycross.

POLO CUP

Let's get in on the action. In 1983, the Polo began causing a stir on the racetrack. In the very first Polo Cup, the racing cars were still equipped with classic naturally aspirated engines. Two Solex twin carburetors increased the output to 59 kW (88 PS) – enough to let the lightweight Polo really fly over the kerbs. Things sped up even more between 1986 and 1989 when the 82 kW (112 PS) Polo G40 was used in the Cup. After a long break, the one-make cup event enjoyed a revival in 2004. Until 2009, up-and-coming drivers had the chance to prove themselves in the ADAC Volkswagen Polo Cup. With a displacement of two litres, the Polo IV delivered a hefty 110 kW (150 PS). The most well-known champion was René Rast, who went on to win the DTM three times.



POLO GTI R5 I RALLY

From 2018 onwards, the expertise gained from the World Championship titles in the WRC became available for purchase ex works: the all-wheel-drive rally car for motorsports-loving customers was based on the sixth-generation Polo. At its heart was the 200 kW (272 PS) 1.6-litre turbocharged engine, which was also installed in a two-litre variant in vehicles including the Polo GTI. Around 100 units of the Polo GTI R5 were hand-crafted for customers. The vehicle still competes successfully in national and international Rally2 championships to this day and has racked up more than 500 victories and over 1,200 podium finishes.

POLO R SUPERCAR I RALLYCROSS

Volkswagen Motorsport also built on its success in the World Rally Championship with its involvement in the FIA World Rallycross Championship. Based on the WRC Polo, the 570 PS Polo R Supercar hit the track in 2017 and 2018. Johan Kristoffersson won the driver's title twice and, together with Petter Solberg, also won the team title for PSRX Volkswagen Sweden. In 2020, Kristoffersson made a comeback in a privateer Polo R Supercar, securing the World Championship title once again. And he managed to achieve all this in a racing series in which full contact is important and the unpredictable plays a vital role. Things have come full circle for Volkswagen: back in the 1980s, Jochi Kleint had already caused a huge stir behind the wheel of the first Golf in the European Rallycross Championship.



¹Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption: 6.9–6.5 l/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 156–149 g/km; CO₂ class: F–E.

1994 THE POLO GOES LARGE 4

POLO III 1994-2001

The third generation was extensively revamped: body, running gear, and engines were completely new. "So big and yet so small" was the advertising slogan, reflecting the fact that the car's exterior dimensions had increased, providing even more space. At 3,715 millimetres in length, the Polo III now had similar dimensions to the Golf I. More materials were being used in the safety structure, and there was more equipment, increasing the kerb weight to 915 kilogrammes. In terms of design, the car had taken a quantum leap forward. What was particularly striking on the new model was its rounder look, as well as the pronounced C-pillar and the raised rear end.

In addition, modern safety systems such as driver and front passenger airbags, seat belt tensioners, and the anti-lock brake system had now appeared on the scene. For the first time in its model history, the Polo was also available as a five-door model, and as an estate from July 1997. In 1998 the Polo sported the three iconic letters more commonly associated with its "big brother", the Golf, for the first time: the limited-edition Polo III GTI sold out quickly.

In September 1999, the Polo was given another makeover: the new model had a redesigned front end, clear glass headlights, modified bumpers, redesigned tail light clusters, and a more high-quality interior with blue backlit instruments. Two airbags and the anti-lock brake system were now fitted as standard, while ESC (Electronic Stability Control) was available as an optional feature.



3.5
MILLION
TOTAL PRODUCTION
WORLDWIDE



"Opens all round. The new Polo Open Air."
POLO III OPEN AIR ADVERT, 1997



POLO III GTI, 1998
With the three magic letters for the first time - and it sold out quickly.



POLO III, 1999
Around 60 percent of the components were optimised as part of a major model update.

BRIGHT, BRASH, AND RELAXED



The Polo is a loveable car, which is why it has woven itself into the hearts of fans for over 50 years. There have also been some unforgettable special editions of the compact car, such as these four iconic models.

Jeans mit Motor.



Wiederkehrend auf die neuen Jahre...
Nur bei den VW-Verkaufsstellen...
Der Jeans Polo. Exklusiv für 9000 Jeans-Fans.



POLO I JEANS

In 1976, drivers of the first Polo special model could really wear the trousers. After having successfully delivered a similar concept with the Jeans Beetle three years earlier, designer Gunhild Liljequist now applied the same approach to the Polo I: denim-look seat covers with pockets and rivets. The first edition was limited to 9,000 units in 1976 and was available in the colours Oregon Beige or Carolina Green colours. The second edition followed in 1978 with 7,800 units. "The car for people who are fun, chilled-out, and cool", as it was described in the brochure, was now available in Alpine White, Mexico Beige, or Mars Red.

POLO II GENESIS

Music arrived in the Polo in 1992. Volkswagen was sponsoring the European tour of the British pop trio Genesis and the tour coincided with the launch of the limited edition "Genesis" model for the Polo II Coupé and Golf Cabriolet. This car was pure pop: with numerous additional features, an integrated sound package, and, most importantly, the exclusive Violet Touch Pearl Effect paint finish, the Polo Genesis hit the top spot in the fan charts. Just like the Genesis album "We Can't Dance".

POLO VI BEATS

There was music to fans' ears in 2017: the Polo beats edition delivered the perfect sound experience while driving. The headphone brand "Beats by Dr. Dre" lent its expertise to the special model, which was equipped with a system from the world-renowned sound specialist. Six speakers plus a subwoofer and a 300-watt 8-channel amplifier ensured the optimum sound. Eye-catching features included "beats" logos on the B-pillars, black-painted exterior mirror housings, decorative film on the bonnet and roof, 16-inch alloy wheels, and a dash pad in Velvet Red.

POLO III OPEN AIR

A breath of fresh air: in 1995, an open-top version of the Polo III offered a completely new perspective with the Open Air special edition. The Polo Open Air was characterised by an electrically operated sunroof that could be pushed back to be in front of the C-pillar. The folding fabric sunroof was so large that even passengers in the rear seats enjoyed a clear view of the sun and blue skies. No Polo has ever been closer to offering the cabriolet experience. And this is what the original Volkswagen advertising text promised: "Fun and driving pleasure. Get in, open the roof, and enjoy driving under the open sky."





HARLEKIN



ID.3 HARLEKIN, 2024

Developed from a spontaneous idea, the modern Harlekin was created in the workshop in Halle 77.



GOLF III HARLEKIN, 1996

Volkswagen also launched a 'Harlequin' model in the US.

A COLOURFUL FUN CAR

It is one of the most curious and iconic models Volkswagen has ever launched on the market: the the Polo Harlekin ("Harlequin"). When the third-generation Polo was introduced in 1995, it brought about something new: equipment packages that could be freely combined. The sales brochure illustrated the modular system with four colours: Pistachio Green stood for the paintwork, Chagall Blue represented the engine and chassis, Ginster Yellow symbolised the equipment, and Flash Red indicated special equipment. In order to visualise the principle on the Polo as well, 20 vehicles were initially repainted in four colours and distributed to the showrooms of Volkswagen dealerships. Demand was high and the marketing gag became a resounding success – in the end, exactly 3,806 units rolled off the production line. In view of this success, Volkswagen decided to also launch a Harlequin model on the American market. The Golf III was chosen for this. But demand for the Golf Harlequin was limited. Nevertheless, the Harlekin is a cult classic.

To this day, the colourful look of the Polo Harlekin still intrigues people – and even inspires modern models: Marco Degenhardt, a passionate gearhead and successful YouTuber ('Halle77 Dortmund' and 'Marcos neue Welt' ('Marco's new world')) is probably the biggest self-confessed Harlekin fan. He has created a new interpretation of the design with the VW e-up! and VW ID.3.



HARLEKIN MADE IN DORTMUND

Marco Degenhardt, an enthusiast with a passion for iconic and special vehicles, designed the electric models with a four-colour look.

THE POLO, BUT DIFFERENT



Open, wild, notchback, or estate?
The Polo can do it all: over the decades,
it has been built in a wide variety of
body variants all over the world.
We've selected four highlights for you here.

EVERYTHING OPEN POLO GTI CABRIOLET 2007

A dream for many fans: a convertible version of the Polo. At the IAA 2007, this dream finally seemed to come true. Showcased in Frankfurt am Main was an open-top Polo – and a GTI version at that. However, the Polo that was designed for unlimited freedom was only a concept. With the Polo GTI Cabriolet, the long-standing, Osnabrück-based Karmann company presented its expertise in the design, construction, and quality of convertibles. It was packed full of intelligent, practical ideas: the clever mechanical soft top system, which folded up in a Z-shape without a convertible roof compartment or side flaps. This created a large boot lid and folding rear seats. A sliding glass sunroof was built into the fabric top. The rear window could be opened separately. The only downside? The Polo GTI Cabriolet never went into production.

FUN 2004

The Polo Fun was a lifestyle-oriented model that made a clear statement: the new Lime exterior paintwork underlined its progressive styling. As a contrast, the entire lower vehicle contour featured a dark matt paint finish. The suspension was raised by around 20 millimetres, thus creating an off-road appearance. The interior also radiated joie de vivre: from the interior equipment in Space Lime or Space Grey to the instrument cluster with chrome rings and aluminium-look pedals. In 2006, the CrossPolo replaced the successful Fun. With the generation change, the vehicle continued its journey with a new look and later became the T-Cross.



DERBY 1977

A Polo with a notchback. The Derby demonstrated what perfect basic mobility could look like: compact, plenty of space, a low purchase price, and economical to run. Based on the Polo I, it was launched in 1977 with a huge boot (515 litres) and was 30 cm longer than the squareback model. In the second generation, the Derby became the "Polo notchback" from 1985. From 1995 to 1997 it was called the "Polo Classic". This variant has since disappeared from the German market, but is still available internationally, as the VW Virtus in Brazil or as the Polo Sedan in South Africa, for example.

VARIANT 1997

The third Polo generation was launched in Europe in 1994. This served as the basis for the Polo Variant, which made its debut in 1997. The five-door model went down in the product line's history as a genuine space miracle – the stowage capacity increased from 390 to 1,250 litres when the rear bench seat was folded down. The third generation of the Polo was updated in 1999 – the Variant was then optionally available with Electronic Stability Control (ESC). The Polo Variant remained in the range until 2001.



WITH A HAPPY FACE



POLO IV 2001-2009

In 2001, the fourth Polo greeted the world with a new face and four clear glass headlights, taking up the design theme of the smaller VW Lupo. In terms of its appearance, the small car could give some compact models a run for their money: a 15-centimetre increase in overall length and a 5 centimetre longer wheelbase compared with the previous generation made this Polo the most spacious yet. In addition, it now offered a luggage compartment volume of 1,030 litres with the rear seats folded down.

Three-cylinder engines were introduced in the engine compartment for the first time. At the other end of the performance scale were the powerful turbocharged engines in the Polo GTI: 110 kW (150 PS), or 132 kW (180 PS) in the Cup Edition. Safety was paramount: front airbags, side airbags, power steering, and the anti-lock brake system (ABS) were now fitted as standard. Electronic Stability Control (ESC) including hydraulically controlled brake assist (HBA) was also available for an additional charge.

In 2003, a notchback saloon became part of the model range once again, with the estate being discontinued. The CrossPolo was launched in 2006 and had a robust off-road look.

The car's look was fundamentally revised once again as part of a comprehensive model update in 2005: the Polo now had the new Volkswagen brand face.



POLO SALOON, 2003
The body of the notchback saloon was 28 centimetres longer.



POLO IV, 2005
Model update with fresh front design and subtle V-shape to the grille

4.1

**MILLION
TOTAL PRODUCTION
WORLDWIDE**

Macht sportlich. Der GTI - jetzt auch als Polo.

*Kilometerverbrauch lt. VDE: 8,1 l/100 km (benzin). CO₂-Ausstoß lt. VDE: 188 g/km. Abgaswerte lt. VDE: CO₂ 188 g/km, CH₄ 0,3 g/km, NMHC 0,2 g/km. Abgaswerte lt. VDE: CO₂ 188 g/km, CH₄ 0,3 g/km, NMHC 0,2 g/km. Abgaswerte lt. VDE: CO₂ 188 g/km, CH₄ 0,3 g/km, NMHC 0,2 g/km.

Aus Liebe zum Automobil

“Makes you sporty.
The GTI - now also as a Polo.”
POLO IV GTI ADVERT, 2006

SHOWING JUST HOW FAST A POLO CAN BE

For three generations, the Polo has shared the honour of carrying these three magical letters. What began with a sporty specification package for the Polo in 1979 went on to become an agile powerhouse with the GTI from 1998.



BIG DREAMS WITH AN ADDED I – POLO III GTI

The third-generation car became the first Polo to follow in the sporty footsteps of its big brother, the Golf, and bear those three iconic letters: the Polo became a bona fide GTI in 1998. Limited to 3,000 units, it sold out quickly. Visually, the compact powerhouse remained rather conservative, with only 15-inch BBS alloy wheels and Fire Red paintwork on the brake calipers testifying to its sporty spirit. A responsive 1.6-litre engine with 88 kW (120 PS) accelerated the first Polo GTI to 100 km/h in 9.1 seconds. And with a sports suspension that had been lowered by another 10 millimetres, it kept close to the beat of the street in the process. The slogan for the fastest series-production Polo of all time summed it up perfectly: "Showing just how fast a Polo can be".

A STRONG COMEBACK – POLO IV GTI

After a seven-year break, the small car from Wolfsburg made a big comeback in 2006: with a turbocharged 1.8-litre engine that now delivered 110 kW (150 PS), the model was a lightweight, coming in with a kerb weight of just 1,200 kilogrammes. The 132 kW (180 PS) Cup Edition was the icing on the cake: visually inspired by the racing cars in the ADAC Volkswagen Polo Cup, the most powerful version of the Polo IV offered acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in 7.5 seconds and a staggering top speed of 225 km/h.

NEW REALMS – POLO V GTI

In 2010, the Polo V GTI with its 132 kW (180 PS) engine accelerated to 100 km/h in just 6.9 seconds. And the 2014 facelift added an extra dose of horsepower: thanks to its 141 kW (192 PS) 1.8-litre TSI engine, the Polo V GTI dazzled with hallmark GTI performance. Acceleration from zero to 100 km/h in just 6.7 seconds and a top speed of 236 km/h catapulted it into a whole new realm.

STRONG PERFORMANCE – POLO VI GTI

The Polo VI GTI boosted the small compact car segment in 2017. The top-of-the-range model impressed with its 147 kW (200 PS) 2.0-litre TSI engine, which accelerated from 0 to 100 km/h in a mere 6.7 seconds. And it did not let up until it reached 237 km/h. As the sixth generation evolved, the 2021 GTI became fully digital and equipped with cutting-edge technology. With its powerful turbocharged petrol engine delivering 152 kW (207 PS), and specially tuned sports suspension, the Polo showcased itself in full GTI tradition. In 2023, a limited edition model honoured a quarter of a century of the Polo GTI. The Polo GTI Edition 25 impressed with features including an exclusive anniversary equipment package. And – like the first Polo GTI – it was now limited to 2,500 units.

¹Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption: 6.9–6.5 l/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 156–149 g/km; CO₂ class: F–E.

²Polo GTI Edition 25 – Combined energy consumption: 7.1–6.8 l/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 161–153 g/km; CO₂ class: F–E.

MORE DYNAMIC THAN EVER

POLO V 2009-2017

"The new Polo is clearly the right car at the right time" was the slogan for the launch of the fifth generation of the successful small car, which debuted in March 2009. Compared with its predecessor, the newest member of the Polo family had once again increased in length and was now almost at the four-metre mark. The clean lines gave the Polo V a sporty, rational look, and buyers now had five new engines to choose from. The highly economical Polo BlueMotion was introduced in December 2009 and had an average consumption of just 3.3 litres of diesel. The sporty Polo GTI was part of the model range once again. A particular highlight was the Polo R WRC Street special model, which, with its 162 kW (220 PS) TSI engine, was the fastest series-produced Polo to date.

In 2014, the Polo IV underwent an extensive model update. In addition to visual touch-ups on the front and rear, the small car was given a substantial technology upgrade: The engines were much more economical, and there were many new safety and assist systems, some of which were adopted from the larger Golf.



POLO V BLUEMOTION, 2009
Economical with new three-cylinder TDI with common rail injection.



POLO V, 2014
The model update brings a fresher look and enhanced technology.



"Gran Turismo for the road."
POLO V GTI ADVERT, 2014

6.3

**MILLION
TOTAL PRODUCTION
WORLDWIDE**

CONSECUTIVE VICTORIES

From zero to world champions in 699 days: the Polo R WRC was Volkswagen Motorsport's successful entry in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). And proved that the Polo had what it takes to become a champion.

Volkswagen announced its return to the World Rally Championship on 05 May 2011. And 699 days later, on 03 October 2013, Sébastien Ogier and his co-driver Julien Ingrassia won the title in the Volkswagen Polo R WRC.

But let's start at the beginning: François-Xavier Demaison joined Volkswagen Motorsport as World Rally Championship Technical Project Manager in early 2011 and was tasked with creating a world rally car based on the Polo V – a 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol-powered car. With direct injection. And a sequentially shifted six-speed gearbox. In preparation for this, Volkswagen Motorsport competed in four rally races in the Škoda Fabia S2000 during the 2011 season. To gain experience. To scout for talent.

In the meantime, the Polo R WRC was born. The two-time World Rally Champion Carlos Sainz Sr. and Volkswagen test driver Dieter Depping completed the first test drives at the beginning of November 2011 in preparation for their entry into the WRC. At almost exactly the same time, the future world champions Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia were brought in and competed in the full 2012 season in the smaller Fabia S2000. Their appearances made a decisive contribution to the development of the Polo R WRC and the preparation of the team.

The Polo celebrated its WRC debut at the Monte-Carlo Rally. And their first victory soon followed, at the second race in



Volkswagen Motorsport won the 2013 and 2014 World Rally Championship titles with the first-generation Polo R WRC.

Sweden. The all-wheel-drive vehicle was a hit right from the outset and raised the bar for many years. In 2013, Volkswagen Motorsport managed to secure the driver, co-driver, and manufacturers' titles in its very first season competing in the ultimate rally driving championships. And the Hanover-based team and their Polo were hard to beat in the next season as well. The next World Championship trophies followed in 2015 and 2016 with an enhanced version of the Polo R WRC.

The Polo R WRC's World Rally Championship journey came to an end on 20 November 2016. And it marked its farewell in fitting style by securing a double victory in Australia. Thus, a success story like no other came to an end. In the 52 World Championship races that Volkswagen Motorsport had contested over four years, the driver of a Polo R WRC stood at the top of the podium no fewer than 43 times – this corresponds to an astonishing win rate of 82.7 percent and gives the team a unique record in the rally history books.



POLO R WRC STREET

As a tribute to the Polo R WRC for the FIA World Rally Championship, Volkswagen decided to launch the limited edition Polo R WRC Street. Only 2,500 units of the Polo R WRC Street were ever produced. The vehicle featured some striking details, such as a bonnet made of a particularly lightweight steel composite. Typical of a Polo, it was fully suited to everyday use and translated that unadulterated rally experience onto the road with 162 kW (220 PS).



New car, more success: with the second generation of the Polo R WRC, Volkswagen racked up World Championship victories three and four in 2015 and 2016.

POLO REIMAGINED



POLO VI 2017-2021

When it comes to small cars, it's one of the greats: by now, the Polo had sold more than 17 million units worldwide and was one of the most successful vehicles in its class. The sixth generation was launched in 2017 with a completely new design: for the first time, the Polo was built on the Modular Transverse Toolkit (MQB). As a result, it gained a number of features that were previously found only in higher vehicle classes, such as Front Assist with City Emergency Braking System (fitted as standard) and Pedestrian Monitoring, the lane change system with Blind Spot Monitor, Rear Traffic Alert, Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), Automatic Post-Collision Braking System, and LED headlights. The Polo VI is also the first Polo to include digital instruments: the second generation of the Active Info Display made its debut in this model.

The modular concept was evident in the amount of space available: the Polo's length had increased by 81 millimetres and its wheelbase by 92 millimetres. It was longer and flatter on the outside than its predecessor, but managed to be larger on the inside. Particularly impressive was its luggage compartment capacity, which had increased to 351 litres. The design aimed to evoke emotional, expressive dynamism.



POLO BEATS, 2017

The name of the special model says it all: a 300-watt sound system delivers rich sound.



POLO GTI, 2017

The flagship GTI model impresses with features including the new Sport Select chassis.



"Makes sure everything fits."

POLO VI ADVERT, 2017

A GLOBAL SUCCESS MODEL

With more than 20 million units built, the Polo is one of the world's most successful small compact vehicles. The small car has been built at many locations.



Series production of the Polo I began in March 1975 at Volkswagen's headquarters in **Wolfsburg**. By 1981, 1.1 million units had been produced there.

Production of the successor was distributed across several locations: the Polo II was produced at the main plant in Wolfsburg until 1992. In 1990 and 1991, around 18,000 units also rolled off the production line at Volkswagen Sachsen in **Mosel**, now part of the municipality of Zwickau.

Production of the small car had already started at the Seat plant in **Pamplona** (Spain) back in March 1984. This participation was based on the benefit of obtaining strategically important access to a production site with low labour costs, which could be used as a cost-effective assembly plant in the long term. Consequently, the production plant in northern Spain became the lead plant for the Polo in 1992 and remained so until 2024. At the Seat plant in **Martorell**, around 400 kilometres away, the Polo was produced as a Classic from 1995 and as a Variant from 1996 – around 90,000 vehicles had been produced in Catalonia by 2001.

In 1996, production of the Polo Classic began at Volkswagen Argentina. Production continued for a total of 12 years at the **Pacheco** plant, about 40 kilometres north-west of the capital Buenos Aires.

Production of the bestseller also started in South Africa in 1996. In **Kariega** (formerly Uitenhage), the small car was initially produced for markets outside Europe, and from 1998 it was also supplied to the UK. Since summer 2024, the plant in the Eastern Cape province, around 1,000 km south of Johannesburg, has been the world's main production site for the Polo.

From 1997 to 1999, Volkswagen manufactured the small car in **Poland** on a semi-knocked-down (SKD) basis where pre-assembled vehicle components are assembled. The Polo was produced at Volkswagen Sarajevo in **Vogošća**, a northern suburb of Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), from 1998 to 2008. On 01 July 1999, production also started in **Bratislava**. In two generations and additionally manufactured as the CrossPolo model, the Polo became the most produced vehicle in the history of Volkswagen Slovakia by 2007, with a total of 777,000 units. The small compact car was built as a saloon in the former Volkswagen plant in **Kaluga**, Russia, from 2010 to 2022.

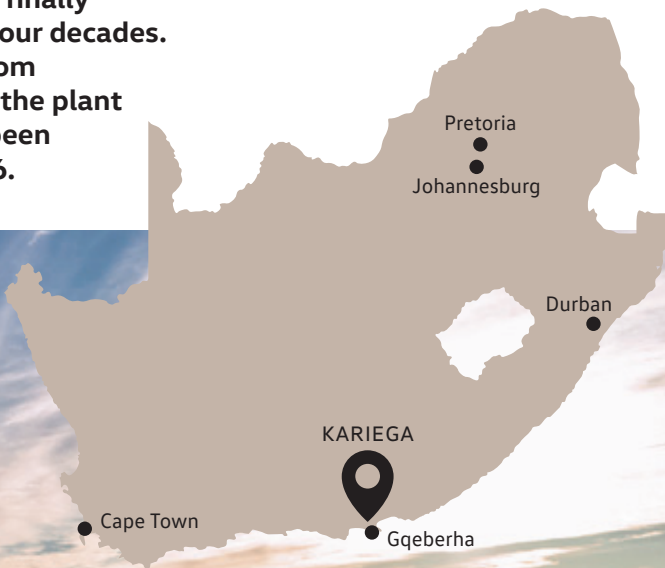
In 2001, the Polo went to China. To this day, the product family is still built at the SAIC Volkswagen Automotive Company's **Anting** plant. When production started, the Polo was only the fourth product line to be produced by Shanghai Volkswagen since the beginnings in 1983.

Since 2002, Volkswagen do Brasil has been producing the small bestseller in two plants: in **Anchieta** and in **Taubaté**. Production in **Brussels** ran from 2006 until the model changeover in mid-2009. The end in Belgium meant a new start in India, where production of the Polo started in **Pune** in 2009. It ended when the Ameo was launched in 2016.

In addition to the Kariega site, the Polo has also been produced in **Thika** (Kenya) on the African continent since the end of 2016. SKD-based assembly started in **Kigali** (Rwanda) in 2018 – another production facility followed in 2020 with **Accra** (Ghana).

MADE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Wolfsburg, Mosel, Bratislava, Brussels, Martorell, and finally Pamplona: the Polo was produced in Europe for over four decades. Since summer 2024, the small car has been coming from Kariega in South Africa. This is not a major change for the plant in the Eastern Cape province – after all, the Polo has been produced there for markets outside Europe since 1996.



The plant in Kariega, an industrial town about 750 km east of Cape Town, has been building Volkswagen models since 1951 – the Polo since 1996.



“Our team is very proud of this car.”

MARTINA BIENE



Pamplona in northern Spain was the main production site for the Polo for more than 40 years. From 1984 onwards, more than 8.4 million units of the small car were produced there. The sixth generation of the five-door car is now being produced in Kariega. “We are building the Polo and Polo Vivo here, as well as the previous generation of the Polo, which is mainly produced for the local market in South Africa and throughout Sub-Saharan Africa,” says Martina Biene, Chairperson and Managing Director of Volkswagen Group Africa (VWGA). In 2024 there was a production record: 167,084 vehicles, of which 131,485 were Polo for global export and 35,599 were Polo and Polo Vivo models for the local market.

The maximum capacity of the plant per year is 171,000 Polo models, with a maximum of 30,000 Vivo models. “This makes us one of the smaller Volkswagen plants,” Biene explains. However, according to Biene, in South Africa it is about more than just manufacturing vehicles and creating jobs: “It’s about community, it’s about Ubuntu.” The term comes from the Nguni languages of Zulu and Xhosa and means ‘I am because we are’. “Ubuntu encourages us to appreciate our humanity and respect each other as human beings,” says Biene.

“We are proud to have changed the demographics of our company and that we are keeping the South African flag flying

by being one of the few factories that are still producing the popular Polo as of July this year,” says Biene. In Kariega, icons such as the Beetle and the Transporter once rolled off the production line, and, until 2009, also the Citi Golf based on the Golf I. The Polo GTI has also been built there for years. “Our team is very proud of this car,” says Biene. “The Polo has a long tradition with us – especially the Polo GTI.” The plant in Kariega was and remains the only one that builds the Polo GTI. From South Africa, the vehicle is exported to 30 markets worldwide.

The Kariega plant covers an area of 518,378 m². In addition to the Polo and Polo Vivo, engines for the Polo Vivo are also produced there. The company also has two parts distribution centres in Cape Town and Centurion near Johannesburg, as well as the National Sales Organisation (NSO) in Johannesburg, which is responsible for vehicle sales on the domestic market and in Sub-Saharan Africa. With a market share of 15.6 percent (2023), Volkswagen is one of the three leading passenger car brands on the South African market and one of the country’s most popular vehicle brands. In 2023, the Polo Vivo was the best-selling car in South Africa and the Polo South Africa’s most exported vehicle. With almost 4,000 employees, VWGA is the largest private employer in the Nelson Mandela Bay metropolitan region, which also includes Kariega.

"A LIKEABLE CAR"

Precise, innovative, emotive: when the Polo came on the market in 1975, hardly anyone suspected that "the little one" would have such a successful career. This is also due to its design that remains timeless.



Hartmut Warkuß, Chief Designer at Volkswagen AG from 1993 to 2003, and his team also designed the fourth Polo generation.

As former Chief Designer of the Volkswagen Group, Hartmut Warkuß and his team created a host of modern classics. Before the now 84-year-old moved to Wolfsburg in 1993, he had already forever shaped the design orientation of the Audi brand. At the beginning of his career, he was responsible for the development of the Audi 50 – which then made history as the Polo.

"There were hardly any differences between the Audi 50 and Volkswagen Polo on the outside, only the roof rounding at the sides was different. But there were production-related reasons for this," explains Warkuß, before waxing lyrical about the Polo I: "It has beautiful proportions and clean lines. This makes it coherent and self-explanatory. It is a design that will work for years to come. The Polo is a likeable car."

The Polo has changed a lot between then and today's sixth generation, but much has remained the same. "Even though

the first Polo has completely different dimensions and the current model is the largest in its family, the proportions remain similar: short overhangs, a harmonious distribution of the roof structure in relation to the vehicle length, the forward-tapered dynamics," says Volkswagen designer Stefan Wallburg, Head of Exterior Design for Europe at the Volkswagen brand.

"The Polo has a design that still works after many years."

HARTMUT WARKUSS

The proportions of the Polo have always been right, and the light design is its hallmark. And so the designers have moved with the times, while also invoking the design of the previous generations. "A good example is the window graphics, which were an important design element back in 1975," says Wallburg. "The long window band on the current Polo is simply more dynamic and powerful. Together with the wedge shape, powerful shoulder section, and tornado line, the sixth-generation Polo displays strong forward momentum. It is significantly more masculine and mature overall – and gives a more agile impression.

There are many more elements today than in the 1970s, but the clarity of the previous eras serves as inspiration for the design team. It has the feeling of well-being like in 1975, paired with high-tech from the 21st century.



"The Polo is a car with a unique and recognisable identity."

ANDREAS MINDT

The design of the Polo has always been characterised by a timeless style.

FUNCTIONAL, TIMELESS, UNMISTAKABLE

Andreas Mindt, Head of Volkswagen Brand Design, on the identity of the Polo design.



Andreas Mindt is Head of Volkswagen Brand Design and has been working for the Volkswagen Group for more than 15 years.

The Volkswagen Polo celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Looking back, what are the most important design features that have made the Polo such an icon in the Volkswagen product range?

The Polo has always been designed with a focus on compact proportions, practicality, and timeless style. From the first generation onwards, the Polo has been designed to be understated yet refined, with clean lines and a robust character. Over the years, these qualities have been continued with every new model, making the Polo not only a practical choice, but also a car with a unique and recognisable identity in our portfolio. It's about simplicity with purpose – a philosophy that is still continued in the Polo today.

There is a special family connection between you and the Polo. Can you tell us how this connection has influenced your approach to the Polo heritage and Volkswagen design in general?

Yes, my family connection to the Polo has given me a unique perspective on its design heritage. This is because my father worked as a designer on the second generation of the Polo, and his work showed me how to be innovative while maintaining a strong connection to the core identity of a model. This approach is at the heart of Volkswagen design. We are constantly looking for ways to push boundaries while respecting the heritage of each model. The Polo in particular has taught me to create a design that is both functional and timeless – qualities that we want to embody throughout our product range.

As Head of Volkswagen Brand Design, how do you see the future of the Polo in terms of design and digitalisation in the automotive industry?

We see a bright future for the Polo. We are excited to bring a new design, advanced digital features, and a new level of connectivity to this iconic model, while remaining true to the qualities that have characterised the Polo for 50 years. I still have a few secrets up my sleeve, but there are definitely some exciting things coming.

The first generation of the Polo was created under the leadership of Herbert Schäfer, Volkswagen's chief designer at the time. A dedicated team worked at his side. How do you feel their collaboration has influenced the Volkswagen design philosophy over the decades?

The team led by Herbert Schäfer laid a strong foundation for what the Polo should represent – simplicity, practicality, and an unmistakable character that would become synonymous with the model. Their shared vision not only shaped the Polo, but also contributed to Volkswagen's broader design ethos by emphasising clarity and practicality. It is an honour to build on this heritage and continue to develop such an iconic design.

DIGITAL AND INNOVATIVE



POLO VI SINCE 2021

In spring 2021, the Polo was comprehensively revamped, giving it an even more high-quality feel: it now boasted a sharper body design and new features such as a light strip and LED headlights on the front grille, plus LED tail light clusters on the modified rear bumper. IQ.LIGHT matrix LED headlights were available on request.

In terms of safety and ride comfort, the Polo was equipped with assist and comfort systems that were usually reserved for higher vehicle classes. These included, for example, the optional IQ.DRIVE Travel Assist – which enabled partly automated driving for the first time, Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), Automatic Emergency Braking, and main-beam control.

The cockpit had gone digital, with screen diagonals of 20 cm as standard and up to 25 cm on request. The new generation of infotainment systems was also on board. There were a number of digital features such as wireless charging, App Connect and features on demand (e.g. for retrofitting the navigation function).

Summer 2021 saw the launch of the new Polo GTI; under the bonnet was a two-litre turbocharged petrol engine providing 152 kW (207 PS). In 2023, a quarter of a century after the first Polo GTI was launched, VW presented the Polo GTI Edition 25² special model – an anniversary edition limited to 2,500 units.

2.5

**MILLION
TOTAL PRODUCTION
WORLDWIDE**
from 2017 to October 2024



“See and be seen. The new Polo”
POLO VI ADVERT, 2021



POLO R-LINE, 2021

The new offering included the Polo, Polo Life, Polo Style, and Polo R-Line.



POLO VI GTI EDITION 25², 2023

The anniversary model impressed fans with its powerful drivetrain, sports suspension, XDS differential lock, and a number of eye-catching design features.

¹Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption: 6.9–6.5 l/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 156–149 g/km; CO₂ class: F–E.

²Polo GTI Edition 25 – Combined energy consumption: 7.1–6.8 l/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 161–153 g/km; CO₂ class: F–E.

WOW, THAT REALLY MADE A SPLASH!

Polo produced to date: **More than 20 million**

4x
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIPS!

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

Polo R WRC

POWER
40
PS
POLO I (1975)

318
PS
POLO R WRC (2015)

ACCELERATION FROM 0 TO 100 KM/H

POLO I (1975): **21.2 s**

POLO VI GTI¹ (2024): **6.5 s**

KERB WEIGHT

685 KG
POLO I (1975)

1,143 KG
POLO VI (2024)

LENGTH: **3,500** MM
WIDTH: **1,559** MM

POLO I (1975)

LENGTH: **4,074** MM
WIDTH: **1,751** MM

POLO VI (2024)

RARELY DID COLOURS SOUND MORE BEAUTIFUL:

SENEGAL RED
OCEANIC BLUE
LOFOTEN GREEN
PHOENIX RED
CLIFF GREEN

SELECTION FOR THE POLO I (1975)

PARTLY AUTOMATED DRIVING



IQ. DRIVE Travel Assist was available in the current Polo for the first time

BASIC PRICE OF THE FIRST POLO
7,500 DM

¹ Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption: 6.9–6.5 l/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 156–149 g/km; CO₂ class: F–E.

50
years of
POLO

